

DI Sub E1 7  
1. (Thrice amended) A water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen which comprises a thickener which is associative and swells in an alkaline medium, said thickener comprising a polymer having a carboxyl group and a hydrophobic group selected from the group consisting of a linear hydrocarbon, a cyclic hydrocarbon, an aromatic hydrocarbon, an halogenated alkyl, an organosilicon group, and a fluorinated carbon group, a pigment, a polar solvent comprising water and other water-miscible solvents and a pH controlling agent.

Please add claims 6-9.

D2 Sub E2 7  
6. The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is a cyclic hydrocarbon.

Sub E3 7  
7. The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is an halogenated alkyl.

8. The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is an organosilicon group.

9. The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is a fluorinated carbon group.

## REMARKS

### I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-9 are pending. Claim 1 has been amended to further clarify that the hydrophobic groups of the thickener are selected from the group consisting of a